

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-29 (canceled)

1 **Claim 30 (currently amended):** ~~The method of claim~~
2 ~~29, further comprising the step of~~
3 A picture coding method including the steps of:
4 inputting moving picture data having an arbitrary
5 frame rate that is not known in advance;
6 determining the input frame rate of the inputted
7 moving picture data;
8 providing a target value for a buffer storage
9 amount;
10 determining a buffer remaining amount of the coded
11 picture data stored in a buffer and not yet outputted by
12 the apparatus;
13 calculating a correction amount based on a
14 difference of said target value and said buffer remaining
15 amount; and
16 calculating a target code amount for use in said
17 coding step by adding said correction amount to said
18 reference target code amount, wherein said target code
19 amount is based on said input frame rate;

20 providing a reference coding frame rate based upon
21 said input frame rate;
22 calculating a reference target code amount using
23 said reference coding frame rate, wherein said target
24 code amount is determined based upon the reference target
25 code amount; and
26 updating said reference coding frame rate, wherein
27 said reference coding frame rate is determined based
28 upon an average value of said measured frame rates within
29 a time interval, and wherein, when the reference coding
30 frame rate before being updated is larger than the
31 reference coding frame rate after being updated, a value
32 between said reference coding frame rate before being
33 updated and said reference coding frame rate after being
34 updated is used as an updated reference coding frame
35 rate.

Claims 31-34 (canceled).

1 **Claim 35 (currently amended):** ~~The method of claim~~
2 ~~34, further comprising the step of~~
3 A picture coding method including the steps of:
4 inputting moving picture data having an arbitrary
5 frame rate that is not known in advance;

6 determining the input frame rate of the inputted
7 moving picture data;
8 providing a reference coding frame rate;
9 determining a reference target code amount using
10 said reference coding frame rate;
11 providing a target value for a buffer storage
12 amount;
13 determining a buffer remaining amount of the coded
14 picture data stored in a buffer and not yet outputted by
15 the apparatus;
16 calculating a correction amount based on a
17 difference of said predetermined target value and said
18 buffer remaining amount;
19 calculating a target code amount for use in said
20 coding step by adding said correction amount to said
21 reference target code amount; and
22 updating said reference coding frame rate, wherein,
23 said reference coding frame rate is determined based
24 upon an average value of said measured frame rates within
25 a time interval, and wherein, when the reference coding
26 frame rate before being updated is larger than the
27 reference coding frame rate after being updated, a value
28 between said reference coding frame rate before being
29 updated and said reference coding frame rate after being

30 updated is used as an updated reference coding frame
31 rate.

Claims 36-39 (canceled).

1 Claim 40 (currently amended): ~~The method of claim~~
2 ~~39, further comprising the step of~~
3 A picture coding method including the steps of:
4 inputting moving picture data having an arbitrary
5 frame rate;
6 coding said moving picture data into coded picture
7 data for storage in a buffer prior to outputting said
8 coded picture data;
9 determining the input frame rate of the inputted
10 moving picture data;
11 determining a reference coding frame rate using said
12 input frame rate;
13 calculating a reference target code amount using
14 said reference coding frame rate;
15 determining a target value for a buffer storage
16 amount using said reference coding frame rate;
17 determining a buffer remaining amount of the coded
18 picture data stored in the buffer and not yet outputted
19 by the apparatus;

20 calculating a correction amount based on a
21 difference of said predetermined target value and said
22 buffer remaining amount; and
23 calculating a target code amount for use in said
24 coding step by adding said correction amount to said
25 reference target code amount, wherein
26 the code amount of the outputted coded picture data
27 is approximated to said target code amount in said coding
28 step; and
29 updating said reference coding frame rate, wherein
30 said reference coding frame rate is determined based
31 upon an average value of said measured frame rates within
32 a time interval, and wherein, when the reference coding
33 frame rate before being updated is larger than the
34 reference coding frame rate after being updated, a value
35 between said reference coding frame rate before being
36 updated and said reference coding frame rate after being
37 updated is used as an updated reference coding frame
38 rate.

1 **Claims 41-44 (canceled).**

1 **Claim 45 (currently amended):** ~~The method of claim~~
2 ~~44, further comprising the step of~~
3 A picture coding method including the steps of:
4 determining a reference coding frame rate using the
5 input frame rate of inputted moving picture data;
6 calculating a reference target code amount using
7 said reference coding frame rate;
8 determining a target value for a buffer storage
9 amount using said reference coding frame rate;
10 determining a buffer remaining amount of the coded
11 picture data stored in a buffer and not yet outputted by
12 the apparatus;
13 calculating a correction amount based on a
14 difference of said predetermined target value and said
15 buffer remaining amount; and
16 calculating a target code amount for use in said
17 coding step by adding said correction amount to said
18 reference target code amount; and
19 updating said reference coding frame rate, wherein,
20 said reference coding frame rate is determined based
21 upon an average value of said measured frame rates within
22 a time interval, and wherein, when the reference coding
23 frame rate before being updated is larger than the
24 reference coding frame rate after being updated, a value
25 between said reference coding frame rate before being

26 updated and said reference coding frame rate after being
27 updated is used as the updated reference coding frame
28 rate.